

**Recreation Outdoor Coalition
4000 Beacon Drive
Anderson, California 96007**

OHV Travel on Maintained Unpaved County Roads

Introduction: There are many miles of maintained, unpaved county roads within the National Forests in northern California. Many of these roads are used by off-highway vehicle (OHV) drivers to access the national forest (NF) road system. County roads have been safely shared by both highway legal and non-highway legal vehicles such as quads and dirt bikes for decades. On the Klamath, Lassen, and Shasta-Trinity National Forests, there have been no documented shared use accidents.

Most California National Forests are currently preparing a travel management plan to update their system of NF roads and trails where motor vehicle use will be allowed. Unpaved NF roads are not considered “highways” under the California Vehicle Code (CVC) 38001, which states: “For the purposes of this division, the term ‘highway’ does not include fire trails, logging roads, service roads regardless of surface composition, or other roughly graded trails and roads upon which vehicular travel by the public is permitted.” CVC 38026 only applies to paved highways (*per Tom Bernardo, State Off-highway Motor Vehicle Division*). The Recreation Outdoor Coalition (ROC) asserts OHV travel on unpaved County and NF roads is legal.

Proposal: ROC respectfully requests the County Board of Supervisors pass a resolution that allows continued OHV travel on all maintained, unpaved county roads unless there is an exception for public safety. On a road-by-road basis, County Supervisors may also wish to add short stretches of paved county roads to your resolution to better link towns and housing developments with community services and other agency public road systems. Share-the-road signs that meet the standards in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* may be installed where desired to inform the public.

Background: OHV recreation in California has soared in the past ten years (1997 to 2007). During this time period, green and red sticker registrations increased 307 percent. Visitation at the State Vehicular Recreation Areas has increased 274 percent. There were 1,101,980 green and red sticker registered vehicles in California in 2007 (*data from Brian Klock, State Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division*). OHV use on the national forests in California is also increasing. OHV recreation and tourism provides many economic benefits to local communities and service providers.

OHV recreation can safely be provided on almost all existing unpaved County and NF roads. Rare exceptions to this may exist and are appropriate for some short road segments if considered unsafe. OHV travel on unpaved County and NF roads is a long-standing accepted practice. Restrictions on OHV travel are not currently enforced by any County sheriff we have talked with.

ROC believes the recreating public will benefit if the national forests and the Counties have similar OHV travel management strategies for both NF and County roads. We shared this same goal with the Lassen National Forest Supervisor Kathleen Morse last May.